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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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Uncle Wiggily And The Horse Chestnut

"Bang! Bango! Bunko! Bunk! Slam!"

Something made a big noise on the front porch of the hollow stump bungalow, where, in the woods, lived Uncle Wiggily Longears, the rabbit gentleman.

"My goodness!" cried Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy, the muskrat lady housekeeper. "I hope nothing has happened!"

"Well, from what I heard I should say it is quite certain that SOMETHING has happened," spoke the bunny uncle, sort of twisting his ears very anxious like.

"I only hope the chimney hasn't turned a somersault, and that the roof is not trying to play tag with the back steps," went on Miss Fuzzy Wuzzy, a bit scared like.

"I'll go see what it is," offered Uncle Wiggily, and as he went to the front door there, on the piazza, he saw Billie Wagtail, the little goat boy.

"Oh, good morning, Uncle Wiggily," spoke Billie, politely.

"Here's a note for you. I just brought it."

"And did you bring all that noise with you?" Mr. Longears wanted to know.

"Well, yes, I guess I did," Billie said, sort of bashful like and shy as he wiggled his horns. "I was seeing how fast I could run, and I ran down hill and got going so lickity-

split like that I couldn't stop. I fell right up your front steps, rattle-te-bang!"

"I should say it was rattle-te-bang!" laughed Uncle Wiggily. "But please don't do it again, Billie."

"I won't," promised the goat boy. "Grandpa Goosey Gander gave me that note to leave for you on my way to the store for my mother. And now I must hurry on," and Billie jumped off the porch and skipped along through the Woodland trees as happy as a huckleberry pie and a piece of cheese.

"What was it all about?" asked Nurse Jane, when Uncle Wiggily came in.

"Oh, just Billie Wagtail," answered the bunny uncle. "He brought a note from Grandpa Goosey, who wants me to come over and see him. I'll go. He has the epizootic, and can't get out, so he wants some one to talk to and to play checkers with him."

Off through the woods went Uncle Wiggily and he was almost at Grandpa Goosey's house when he heard some voices talking. One voice said:

"Oh, dear! How thirsty I am!"

"And so am I!" said another.

"Well, children, I am sorry," spoke a third voice, "but I cannot give you any water. I am thirsty myself, but we cannot drink until it rains, and it has not rained in a long, long time."

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" cried the other voices again. "How thirsty we are!"

"That's too bad," thought Uncle Wiggily. "I would not wish even the bad fox to be thirsty. I must see if I can not be of some help."

So he peeked through the bushes and saw some trees.

"Was it you who were talking about being thirsty?" asked the rabbit gentleman, curious like.

"Yes," answered the big voice. "I am a horse chestnut tree, and these are my children," and the large tree waved some branches, like fingers, at some small trees growing under her.



"And they, I suppose, are pony chestnut trees," said Uncle Wiggily.

"That's what we are!" cried the little trees, "and we are very thirsty."

"Indeed they are," said the mother tree. "You see we are not like you

animals. We cannot walk

to a spring or well to get a drink when we are thirsty. We have to stay, rooted in one place, and wait for the rain, or until some one waters us."

"Well, some one is going to water you right away!" cried Uncle Wiggily in his jolly voice. "I'll bring you some water from the duck pond, which is near by."

Then, borrowing a pail from Mrs. Wobblewobble, the duck lady, Uncle Wiggily poured water all around the

dry earth, in which grew the horse chestnut tree and the little pony trees.

"Oh! How fine that is!" cried the thirsty trees. "It is almost as nice as rain. You are very good, Uncle Wiggily," said the mother tree, "and if ever we can do you a favor we will."

"Thank you," spoke Uncle Wiggily, making a low bow with his tall silk hat. Then he went on to Grandpa Goosey's where he visited with his epizootic friend and played checkers.

On his way home through the woods, Uncle Wiggily was unpleasantly surprised when, all of a sudden out from behind a stone jumped a bad bear. He wasn't at all a good, nice bear like Beckie or Neddie Stubtail.

"Bur-r-r-r-r!" growled the bear at Uncle Wiggily. "I guess I'll scratch you."

"Oh, please don't," begged the bunny uncle.

"Yes, I shall!" grumbled the bear. "And I'll hug you, too!"

"Oh, no! I'd rather you wouldn't!" said the bunny uncle. For well he knew that a bear doesn't hug for love. It's more of a hard, rib-cracking squeeze than a hug. If ever a bear wants to hug you, just don't you let him. Of course if daddy or mother wants to hug, why, that's all right.

"Yes, I'm going to scratch you and hug you," went on the bad bear, "and after that—well, after that I guess I'll take you off to my den."

"Oh, please don't!" begged Uncle Wiggily, twinkling his nose and thinking that he might make the bear laugh.

For if ever you can get a bear to laugh he won't hurt you a bit. Just remember that. Tickle him, or do anything to get him to laugh. But this bear wouldn't even smile. He just growled again and said:

"Well, here I come, Uncle Wiggily, to hug you!"

"Oh, no you don't!" all of a sudden cried a voice in the air.

"Ha! Who says I don't?" grumbled the bear, impolite like.

"I do," went on the voice. And the bear saw some trees waving their branches at him.

"Pooh! I'm not afraid of you!" growled the bear, and he made a rush for the bunny. "I'm not afraid of trees."

"Not afraid of us, eh? Well, you'd better be!" said the mother tree. "I'm a strong horse chestnut and these are my strong little ponies. Come on, children, we won't let the bear get Uncle Wiggily." Then the strong horse chestnut tree and the pony trees reached down with their powerful branches and, catching hold of the bear, they tossed him up in the air, far away over in the woods, at the same time pelting him with green, prickly horse chestnuts, and the bear came down ker-bunko in a bramble brier bush.

"Oh, wow!" cried the bear, as he felt his soft and tender nose being scratched. "I'll be good! I'll be good!" And he was, for a little while, anyhow. So this shows you how a horse chestnut tree saved the bunny gentleman.